

four nights of the week they have their own cook and someone else, probably a minimum-wage slave, does their grocery shopping for them. I'll admit that when I heard this, becoming a Theta was sounding pretty good, but for some reason, the Theta house felt more exclusive and less open than the Pi Phi house did—not to mention that the cost to join was still a bit much for my wallet to handle at \$560.

DELTA GAMMA (ΔΓ)

www.ualberta.ca/~deltagam/

The third stop on our whirlwind tour of the sororities was the Delta Gamma (Dee Gee) house, founded in 1873 at Lewis School in Oxford, Mississippi. Once again singing and free food ensued and I could feel my pants getting a little tighter, but I valiantly took another cookie and pulled myself together in the face of adversity to bring you the inside scoop on the Dee Gees. This house was actually my favorite on the tour bus, but as I was told by my Rho Gamma, "Different strokes for different folks. You'll know in your heart which sorority is right for you and you'll make the best decision for you," so don't let my bias cloud your judgment of the other houses. The Dee Gees are involved in helping the elderly and working with charities that provide aid to the blind. The house itself was the newest of the four. It has room for seven girls to live, one of these being, of course, the president of the sorority and then which ever lackeys she decides will be most suitable. One upside to being a Dee Gee is that each room is furnished so there's no need worry about moving anything heavy if this house is where you end up. The most obvious drawback to the Dee Gee house is that it's located right next to the Delta Kappa

Epsilon (Dees) house, and they have a reputation for partying, so I would be prepared for pranks and loud noise if I lived there. Rent at the Dee Gee house is respectable at between \$375–500 a month like most of the other houses on campus, however, the fee to join the Dee Gees is still ridiculously high at \$595 for the year.

ALPHA GAMMA DELTA (ΑΓΔ)

www.alphagammadelta.net

The Alpha Gamma Delta house was the last stop on the tour and once again I was greeted with a theme that was starting to get old by now; you guessed it, singing and mini sandwiches. However, the Alpha Gammals—founded in 1904 at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York—redeemed their lack of theme variation by being the nicest and most sincere group of girls that I met. As a slightly smaller group, I was able to have a good conversation with two of the ladies who provided me with some valuable information about choosing a sorority. I was told to "listen to whatever my heart told me" and I should join a group only if I really clicked with them; I would know when I was finally initiated that I had made the right choice. This advice was quite astute, because the more I learned, the more I realize that the decision to join a women's fraternity isn't one that should be taken lightly—it becomes a big part of your life. While the ladies of Alpha Gamma Delta were certainly very nice, I found that their house was the most disappointing. It's an older house, and although the inside has been freshly renovated it still retains some of its former shabbiness. The Alpha Gamma house also has less living space available for members wishing to move in, with room for only five people, so chances are slim

that you'll get a room there. Rent is much the same as the other houses, falling between \$325–475 depending on the room, and once again, you face the extremely high costs of being a part of the "in crowd," at \$594 for the year.

TO JOIN OR NOT TO JOIN

After my journey through the Greek labyrinths of campus, I was surprised to realize that I had actually enjoyed myself. Despite the fact that my clothes were fitting a bit more snugly than before I started, I was—gasp—even thinking about joining a sorority. Over the course of my visits, I realized that each house has something unique and interesting to offer, and that joining really depends on how you mesh with the other girls and how your values match up to theirs. If you feel it in your gut, write the cheque and sign up. If not, then skip the toga altogether and go for some Greek food instead—at least it's cheaper than joining a sorority. But what I really discovered is that, though it may not be right for everyone, if you have the money and the time to devote to the house, joining a women's fraternity can be a great way to make friends and become a more active member of the community. More importantly, you can't really get reliable information from movies where the main plot line is based entirely on partying. The best way to educate yourself is first-hand experience. In the end, I decided not to join any of the women's fraternities because, like every other student on campus, I'm just trying to scrounge together enough cash to pay for next semester's tuition. Not only that but I'm too cheap to shell out \$600 to make some friends. You might call it an "Oscar the Grouch Complex," but I call it budgeting.



After scamming as many free cookies as possible, my next goal was to play myth-busters and find out just what was true about sororities and what was bonafide bullshit.

THE MYTH:

If you join a sorority you will have to endure some form of cruel initiation ritual or hazing, or that you could be drugged and date raped at a party.

WHAT I LEARNED:

The Panhellenic Council has a strict no-hazing policy. They look very badly upon houses that haze their members and urge women who feel that they've been hazed to report the incident to a council member. While this isn't to say that you will never experience hazing by someone who disregards these rules, if it does happen there are people who will stand behind you and maintain that what happened to you was wrong. I was told that the best way to prevent these types of occurrences was to refuse doing anything if it made me uncomfortable or to remove myself from the situation altogether. And while instances of male fraternity members drugging or using date rape drugs on sorority females cannot be controlled by the Panhellenic Council, they do urge all the girls in the sorority to keep an eye on their drinks and

to consume in moderation. They also urge the girls to go to parties and events in groups and to watch out for each other as much as possible.

VERDICT: MYTH BUSTED

THE MYTH:

If you join a sorority you'll be partying like it's 1999 every night of the week.

WHAT I LEARNED:

Sorry to everyone who craves an *Old School*-esque party experience, but all of the sorority houses on campus are dry by choice. No alcohol is allowed on house premises at anytime, which isn't to say that sorority members can't drink, they're just encouraged to do it on their own time or at scheduled events and parties. The alcohol ban is probably a good thing since it removes the temptation to drink and allows sorority members to concentrate on more important things, like their studies. It's not just alcohol that's banned at the houses either: men are banned from the upstairs of the houses unless they are helping with a move or any other G-rated activities. So, if you're looking for a good place to drink and hook-up, best head for a hotel room because you won't be getting any lovin' at the sorority houses

VERDICT: MYTH BUSTED

THE MYTH:

Joining a sorority will take up a large amount of your time and you have to spend every waking minute with the group.

WHAT I LEARNED:

Joining a sorority doesn't have to be a huge time commitment if you don't want it to be. Each house does require your presence at mandatory Monday night meetings or group dinners, in addition to a few select events throughout the year, but ultimately, how much time you decide to spend with the group is really a matter of choice and what you want to get out of your sorority experience.

VERDICT: MYTH BUSTED

THE MYTH:

It's hard to get into a sorority because they only look for the "cool" girls that look or dress a certain way, or have a certain major, or are rich.

WHAT I LEARNED:

Every women's fraternity on this campus is filled with unique women with different personalities, ethnicities, and many different goals and majors. All of the sororities are very accepting of diversity, and though you still may get cut from the team, it will not be because of how you look or because of your net worth; it really all boils down to chemistry.

VERDICT: MYTH BUSTED